

Wind

by Susanne Barringer

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DISCLAIMER: Characters belong to Fox, 1013, and Chris Carter. No
infringement intended.
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THANKS to Sue, as always--this time for playing metaphor with me and
lending me one of hers when I ran out.
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> Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
 A fine wind
is blowing the new direction of Time.
> - D.H. Lawrence
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>
 The office is still. Nothing moves. It is unsettling. How can
something that is usually so alive remain so deathly frozen?

Nothing moves. Nor do I. I sit, waiting, watching, my eyes darting
across furniture, files, papers, machines. No sign that this space
belongs to living, breathing people. It is a tomb, the stillness a
mere hollow echo of absence.

The air conditioning thumps on and the change in air movement
flutters the edge of a newspaper clipping on the bulletin board. I
see it out of the corner of my eye and turn to look, but by the time

my gaze catches it, the movement has ceased. Just a momentary flutter, a mirage of movement amid the noisy placidity that screams in my ears.

The clatter of solitude weighs heavily, bordering on unbearable. This large room, filled to the brim with records of dark deaths and violent acts, swallows me. I am small inside this cavernous space, alone, lost in my seclusion. The stillness makes it difficult to breathe, the air tight and dry inside my lungs. My breathing does nothing to alleviate the paralysis. I feel trapped in this sepulcher of solitude, the loss palpable enough to leave the room still, breathless, dead.

I want to feel the wind in my hair. The way it presses against me. Not the kind of wind that comes in gusts, but the kind that rolls in from the ocean, a steady loving pressure against the chest, face, body. Its caress combs the hair off the face and makes the strands dance about the back of the neck. Reliable and steady in its touch, like a familiar lover.

When I lean forward it cradles me, protects me from falling. It balances with my body, holding me up as I edge into it, weight on the balls of my feet. It speaks in whispers past my ears, and when I close my eyes it feels as though my eyelids are pressed flat. I lean forward more, testing it, trusting it, and it leans back, carries me, holds me in its arms. I miss the wind, here in the stillness of the office. The absence beats against my heart which slows in the silence, as though my blood itself has deadened its pace to match the dearth of movement.

Then, Mulder enters.

With him comes a flurry of movement. He assumes I am working so he only smiles at me when I look up at him, doesn't speak. He drops the files he is carrying onto the desk, and they slide over each other as the ones on the top plummet off the pile. Mulder steps to the file cabinet, pushing one half-open drawer closed before opening the one above it. The clang of the metal drawers fills the room with life, with breath. He taps his foot on the floor as he flips through the files, as if he wants to dance, not work.

The room is alive, the squalor of its previous decay falling away with the graceful movement of the man who has entered. Such a minor change, such a profound effect. As Mulder backs away from the file cabinet, the pile of files on the desk suddenly teeters and the whole thing falls over with a swish. The movement is spurred on by nothing but inevitable gravity, or, perhaps, a slight change in air current as Mulder moved. Wind.

Mulder sits, but never stops moving. Always a bouncing leg or a pen tapping on the desk or his hands combing through his hair or a pat on the edge of a stack of papers to straighten them. He is the epitome of activity. Not silent, not still. He smiles, tugs on his tie, rocks back and forth in his chair, drums his fingers. Movement, rhythm, exuberance, life.

He gets up again, walks past my desk to retrieve something from the other side of the room. His swinging arms and legs stir the air around him, cutting a path through the stifling stillness.

As if he senses my inner disquiet, he lays his hand gently atop my head as he walks by where I am sitting, an unexpected gesture of reassurance or affection or possessiveness. My thoughts, my heartbeat, my life speed up to meet the resurrected pulse of this breathing room.

The wind in my hair.

I want to touch the wind. I want to feel the embrace for which I ache, its caress cool against my still heat, my pounding blood. When he passes by my desk again, I reach out to touch the wind.

My fingers brush against his knuckles, a feather-breeze of a touch. He takes another half stride before he feels it and stops. His hand reaches to take mine as he turns back to look at me. He squeezes gently and I look straight in front of me at my hand in his, at the way his fingers wrap around mine as if sheltering me, protecting me from the deadly stillness that I dread.

I look up at him and he is smiling down at me, a fusion of concern and puzzlement at my sudden need. I don't know which I need more--that touch or that smile. I see the storm in his eyes, the raging gusts of emotions blowing there, too strong to lean against safely, but reassuring in their presence. How much could I take before I would be blown away like soft dusty particles trapped in a whirlwind? Flung around and around until I don't know which way is up, hoping to land softly and safely in the comfort of a warm breeze, but terrified of the hard surfaces that could leave me flattened and barren.

For some reason, he raises our joined hands to his lips, plants a light kiss on my knuckles like some kind of gallant prince. I am kissed by the wind, left breathless and longing as he smiles again, then lets go and walks away. The torrent rises and I wonder how the tears manage to escape from the tangle of my heart, breaking like a summer storm over the ominous stillness.

I feel like the sailors of old, days spent floating directionless on the wide expanse of tedious seas, waiting for wind to carry them home. Day after day of still air, heavy and weighted like honeyed cotton, holding them back, keeping them from life.

I will not fall into oblivion, sucked in ever-narrowing circles toward stagnation. Mulder looks at me once again before sitting down, his brow creased in worry at what he sees. He tilts his head in sympathy. The weight of his touch lingers on my head, across my hand. I have been kissed by the wind.

The memory of it flutters in the breeze, brushing against my dying heart and bouncing it back to life. I lean into the wind and breathe.

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Feedback is the wind beneath my wings. :) sbarringer@usa.net
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All my fanfic available at
> <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Dreamworld/2442>

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